

**Abstract.** *The objective of the article is to investigate the structure of individual's emotional relationship with any brand, associated antecedents and consequences based on prior literature review. Prior literature states that an individual can love a brand and the dimensional structure of this consumer-brand love is very similar to that of interpersonal romantic love. This article has criticized prior literatures in the area of love and attachment. It has also analyzed how brand loyalty is conceptually different from brand love. A set of conceptualizations have been developed.*

*The conceptualizations relate to the theoretical antecedents and consequences of romantic consumer-brand love identified. Traditional researches in the field of branding shows that satisfaction directly leads to brand loyalty. Present analysis challenges this conventional notion by stating that the relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty is mediated by other variables, like, romantic brand love and customer delight. The article also explains how the theoretical antecedents of romantic brand love identified can be considered in the context of marketing strategy formulation and implementation.*

**Keywords:** brand experience, brand love, brand loyalty, customer delight, romanticism, satisfaction.

## **ROMANCING WITH A BRAND: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF ROMANTIC CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIP**

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## 1. Introduction

Many researchers have investigated consumer attitude towards brand and we have got concepts like, satisfaction (Higgins, 1997) and brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Satisfaction alone is not enough to keep the customers loyal (Jones and Sasser, 1995). Many satisfied customers switch to competitor's brand (Reichheld, 1996). Hence, satisfaction may result in loyalty if it sustains for a longer period of time. Few, but not all satisfied customers tend to love a brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). The earlier authors have also stated that the nature of this brand love is very similar to the interpersonal love and attachment (Shimp and Madden, 1988; Keh et al., 2007; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) study empirically shows it that emotional and passionate love with a brand is a predictor of brand loyalty. Therefore, loving a brand (and not mere satisfaction) is a move towards loyalty. So, marketers must try to make the satisfied customers love a brand. According to Roberts (2004), in this era of intense competition between brands and customer indifference brands must be converted into lovemarks in the eyes of the consumers in order to survive.

By reexamining the dimensional structure of love, this study intends to identify the antecedents and consequences of brand love and put forward certain propositions related to their interrelationships. Prior literature says that the concept of brand love has been emerged from the concept of interpersonal love and attachment (Shimp and Madden, 1988; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Keh et al., 2007). Therefore, to understand the nature of brand love it is necessary to investigate the dimensional structure of interpersonal love. Rest of this paper will explain the concept of brand love based on the theories on interpersonal love followed by a set of propositions and a discussion on the practical implications of those propositions.

## 1. Interpersonal love theories

According to Spearman (1927), the feeling of love is unidimensional and positive. However, this unidimensional view has been challenged later by several researchers. Thurstone (1938) and Thomson (1939) have stated that the feeling of love can be decomposed into several underlying bonds of feelings. However, they didn't identify and define specific components of love. Lee (1977) proposed six types of interpersonal love attitudes or love styles. The study also states that any one kind of love style may get converted to another kind over time between the same individuals. Though Lee conducted rigorous qualitative and quantitative studies to identify six love styles, few styles identified by Lee can not be considered as pure love style. For example, logical love or pragma and game playing love described by Lee (1977) mainly reflect the ways to search or change partners, rather than actual love. Lee (1977) has stated that there are several underlying dimensions of each love attitude, but has not clearly explained those dimensions. However, from the definitions of the

six love attitudes given by Lee (1977) it can be inferred that emotion, passion and commitment can be three underlying dimensions. Though, several other dimensions are also possible.

Sternberg (1986) has done a seminal work and proposed the Triangular Theory of love. He has stated that interpersonal love consists of three highly correlated dimensions: intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. These three components can be considered as the vertices of a triangle. Intimacy is largely, but not exclusively derived from emotional investment in a loving relationship and refers to the feeling of closeness. Passion is largely, but not exclusively derived from the motivational involvement which leads to different forms of physical and psychological arousals. Decision/commitment is largely, but not exclusively the cognitive element of love. Decision implies the recognition of the loving relationship by the partners in the short-term and commitment refers to the desire to maintain the loving relationship for long-term in future. According to Sternberg (1986), when all three components are present in a loving relationship in almost equal degrees, then it becomes complete love or consummate love. Therefore, a complete love can be represented as an equilateral triangle. He has proposed eight types of interpersonal love depending on the presence or absence of one or more of these three components. Table 1 below shows the love typology given by Sternberg (1986).

*Table 1*

**Sternberg's (1986) Love Typology**

Kind of Love	Intimacy	Passion	Decision/Commitment
Nonlove	—	—	—
Liking	+	—	—
Infatuated Love	—	+	—
Empty Love	—	—	+
Romantic Love	+	+	—
Companionate Love	+	—	+
Fatuous Love	—	+	+
Consummate/Complete Love	+	+	+

**Source:** Sternberg (1986).

Note: (+) denotes the presence of the respective component and (-) denotes the absence of the respective component.

According to Sternberg's (1986) Triangular love theory, romantic love consists of intimacy and passion, but doesn't include commitment (refer to the sixth row of Table 1). This kind of romantic love can be experienced by a consumer with respect to a brand (Shimp and Madden, 1988). Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory can be considered as highly scientific compared to the other love theories. Because, Sternberg conducted the study considering the involvement of

individual respondent in different kinds of love relationships (like, love for parents, siblings, friend of same sex) in addition to the heterosexual love relations existing between the typical lovers.

## **2. Emergence of the romantic brand love concept from interpersonal love theories**

Shimp and Madden (1988) have proposed that the structure of consumer-object (the object can be a brand) relationship is very similar to the structure of interpersonal love as stated by Sternberg (1986). The components of consumer-object relationship as stated by Shimp and Madden (1988) are – liking, yearning and decision/commitment, which perfectly correspond to intimacy, passion and decision/commitment components of interpersonal love relationship respectively as described by Sternberg (1986). Liking refers to the intimate feelings for a brand. Yearning refers to the passion for a brand which takes the form of different types of arousal. Decision refers to the individual's recognition of the liking and yearning for the brand in short-term. Commitment refers to the individual's repeat purchase of the same brand over a longer period of time in future. According to Shimp and Madden (1988), the presence of all three components leads to brand loyalty. It means that Sternberg's (1986) definition of complete love is equivalent to Shimp and Madden's (1988) definition of brand loyalty. Shimp and Madden have also given a typology of consumer-object relationship depending on the presence or absence of one or more components which is given below in Table 2.

*Table 2*

**Shimp and Madden's (1988) Typology of Consumer-Brand Relationship**

Kinds of Relation	Liking	Yearning	Decision/ Commitment
Nonliking	—	—	—
Liking	+	—	—
Infatuation	—	+	—
Functionalism	—	—	+
Inhibited Desire	+	+	—
Utilitarianism	+	—	+
Succumbed Desire	—	+	+
Loyalty	+	+	+

**Source:** Shimp and Madden (1988).

Note: (+) denotes the presence of the respective component and (—) denotes the absence of the respective component.

Each row of Table 1 perfectly corresponds to the respective row of the Table 2 according to the explanations given by Shimp and Madden (1988).

Shimp and Madden (1988) have proposed a concept called inhibited brand desire (refer to the sixth row of Table 2) which consists of liking (or intimacy) and yearning (or passion) for a brand, but doesn't include the decision/commitment. Because of the presence of several external constraints, like, family pressure, low disposable income, social group pressure etc, an individual may not show any commitment to a brand in terms of repeat purchase, though he/she might have intimate and passionate feelings for the brand. This brand desire is equivalent to Sternberg's (1986) conceptualization of romantic love which consists of intimacy and passion and doesn't include commitment (compare the sixth rows of both Tables 1 and 2). Whang, Allen, Sahoury and Zhang's (2004) study has revealed that a consumer can experience passionate eros and emotional mania love for a brand and both the love styles had positive impact on the overall romantic love for the brand. They conducted the study on a group of Harley-Davidson bikers. However, in this study the authors have not investigated the multidimensional structure of romantic brand love and they have used unidimensional romantic brand love scale. This study has also shown that romantic brand love and brand loyalty are different concepts.

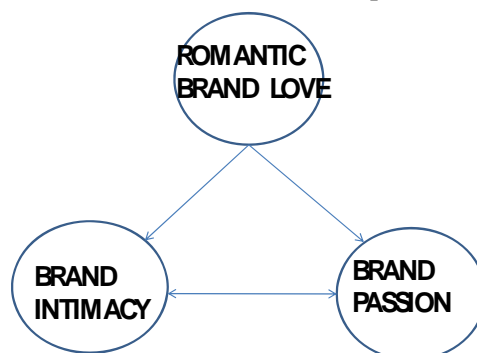
According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love is an emotional and passionate feeling of an individual for a particular trade name. They have not considered commitment as a dimension of brand love. They have proposed a unidimensional scale of brand love. This scale is subject to criticism, as the majority of the researches on love say that love is a multidimensional feeling (Thurstone, 1938; Thomson, 1939; Lee, 1977; Sternberg, 1986). However, according to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love is conceptually different from brand loyalty. In the maximum likelihood factor analysis conducted by them, the items measuring brand love and brand loyalty loaded on different factors showing the existence of discriminant validity. Brand love does not include commitment, where as, brand loyalty includes commitment (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Whang et al., 2004).

Few researchers postulate that love towards any object or brand includes commitment or the loyalty (Sternberg, 1986; Keh et al., 2007). Contrary to these findings few studies also show that brand love is a predictor of brand loyalty (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Whang et al., 2004). If brand love is a predictor of brand loyalty, then they must be two different concepts. If commitment is included as a dimension of love, then it becomes difficult to distinguish between love and loyalty. Hence, in the present analysis, romantic brand love has been conceptualized as a combination of emotion (or intimacy or liking) and passion (or yearning) for a brand which might lead to commitment or loyalty over time. Commitment or behavioral loyalty can be an outcome of romantic brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Whang et al., 2004). This article intends to use the term 'romantic brand love' as a more scientific expression. In brief, it can be called as 'brand love'. According to Sternberg (1986), complete love

includes all three components – intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. In the same theory he has stated that romantic love includes only intimacy and passion. Romantic love, therefore, doesn't include commitment. This is how romantic love is different from loyalty. Sternberg (1986) has also stated that in practical life, any love relation is a combination of these three components present in varying proportions. Theoretically it can be conceptualized that any component is completely absent. However, practically it is more viable to think that a component is present at a very lower level compared to the other components instead of being completely absent. Hence, in a practical scenario, a romantic love relationship is composed of high degrees of intimacy and passion and a lower degree of commitment. In other words, the relative amount of commitment in a romantic love relationship will be negligible.

This article also proposes that romantic brand love is multidimensional and challenges the notion of unidimensional brand love conceptualized by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). They have proposed a unidimensional brand love scale; however, they have not reported about the validity and reliability of that scale. Following the triangular theory of love proposed by Sternberg (1986), it is proposed that romantic brand love consists of two dimensions: brand intimacy and brand passion, but not commitment. That is how romantic brand love is conceptually different from brand loyalty. Intimacy and passion dimensions of love are highly interactive (Sternberg, 1986; Shimp and Madden, 1988). One difference between brand love and interpersonal love is that the interpersonal love is bidirectional, where as the brand love is unidirectional. Because, a brand can't reciprocate. However, there are exceptions, like, customer care executive's (representing a brand) highly caring behavior to a consumer, love of a pet dog for the master or the love of a prostitute (service provider) for a client. In all these examples, brand is reciprocating.

Remaining part of this article will focus on identifying relevant antecedents and consequences of romantic brand love. Figure (1) given below shows the dimensional structure of romantic brand love conceptualized.



**Figure 1. Two dimensional structure of romantic brand love**

[In the above diagram the single headed arrow denotes dependence relationships and double headed arrow represents covariance relationship]

#### **4. Actionable antecedents to romantic brand love**

##### **4.1. Satisfaction and brand love**

According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love is an emotional and passionate feeling of an individual for a brand. According to them, satisfaction is a pre-requisite to brand love and have stated that the brand love is “experienced by some, but not all, satisfied consumers” (p 81). Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2007) have used projective techniques and have investigated the underlying dimensions of brand love. Long-term satisfactory relationship with the brand is one of the dimensions identified in their study. The study conducted by Whang et al. (2004) shows that the length of the bike ownership had significant positive impact on the romantic love for the bike brand in case of the Harley-Davidson bike owners. These findings indicate that the feeling of satisfaction must be prolonged in order for getting converted into brand love. Satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluative judgment (Mano and Oliver, 1993). However, it is not entirely cognitive. As Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005) have stated that post-consumption satisfaction is likely to lead to emotional attachment with a brand over time with multiple interactions with the brand. It implies that cumulative satisfaction over longer period tends to lead to the feelings of love for a brand through multiple interactions.

*Conceptualization 1:* Satisfaction with the brand, if sustained for longer period, positively influences the feeling of romantic love for the brand.

##### **4.2. Individual romanticism and brand love**

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) have stated that brand love is a blend of emotion and passion of an individual for a brand. According to Sternberg (1986), the presence of only intimacy (which is derived from emotion) and passion without the presence of commitment gives rise to romantic love. According to Shimp and Madden (1988), intimacy and passion both might be present in the context of consumer-brand relationship. Therefore, brand love is romantic in nature.

Romanticism is an important individual difference variable (Holbrook and Olney, 1995). Romantic individuals are highly emotive, imaginative and celebrate irrationality (Campbell, 1987). Using the power of imagination the romantic individuals can create pleasurable arousals surrounding any consumption act and engage in hedonic consumption. According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), hedonic consumption involves emotive arousal taking place within the consumer while consuming. According to Sternberg (1986), arousal is the manifestation of passion.

According to Holbrook and Olney (1995), the romantic individual is highly emotional and seeks pleasure. As brand love refers to a strong emotional and

passionate connection between the individual and the brand, it is expected that a high romantic person is more likely to fall in love with a brand.

*Conceptualization 2:* Individual romanticism personality trait positively influences romantic brand love.

#### **4.3. Brand experience and brand love**

Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) have conceptualized brand experience as internal and subjective response of an individual towards a brand which consists of sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual dimensions evoked by brand-related stimuli. The stimuli might be brand design, packaging, marketing communication or store environment. According to them, brand experience is not entirely an affective construct, but over a period of time brand experience may lead to a strong emotion laden attitude towards a brand.

According to Lee (1977) love is an attitude. So, romantic brand love is also an attitude towards the brand. The proposed romantic brand love is emotion laden, as it consists of emotion or intimacy and passion.

*Conceptualization 3:* Favourable brand experience evoked positively influences romantic brand love over time.

#### **4.4. Individual romanticism and brand experience**

According to Campbell (1987), a romantic individual is highly imaginative. Based on this power of imagination the romantic person can imagine several things beyond reality and by doing this he/she creates pleasurable experiences surrounding any consumption act. According to Holbrook (1997), romantic individual enriches the experience-seeking process surrounding any consumption act through the process of subjective personal introspection. Subjective personal introspection refers to the self-examination of one's own psychic world. Hence, it is assumed that individual romanticism enriches the experiences in the context of brand consumption. The power of imagination and subjective personal introspection are the distinguishing characteristics of highly romantic individual.

*Conceptualization 4:* Individual romanticism positively influences brand experience through subjective personal introspection process.

#### **4.5. Customer delight and brand love**

According to Almeida and Nique (2005), customer delight is a highly positive disconfirmation of expectations related to a company and its offering which consists of five dimensions: affect, cognition, post-consumption evaluation, positive surprise and personalization. In the study conducted by Almeida and Nique (2005), principal



component factor analysis with varimax rotation was done to explore the dimensionality of customer delight and the largest variance was accounted for the emotion or affect component. It shows that when a customer is delighted with a brand, he/she tends to develop an emotional bonding with the brand. Kumar (1996) has also stated that customer delight is an emotional level characterized by high levels of joy and surprise in connection with any consumption.

Hence, it is proposed that this affective customer delight will positively influence romantic brand love, as brand love has strong affective focus (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

*Conceptualization 5:* Customer delight positively influences brand love.

#### **4.6. Satisfaction and customer delight**

Customer delight has cognitive dimension which measures the level of satisfaction achieved (Almeida and Nique, 2005) after consuming a goods/service. This dimension includes items, like, “In this experience all the attributes that could be satisfactory were more than satisfactory” and “The quality of service/goods is superior to that of others” (p 40). The scale items mentioned show that satisfaction is one dimension of customer delight. Satisfaction is partly cognitive, as it is a post-consumption evaluative judgement (Mano and Oliver, 1993). The study conducted by White and Yi-Ting (2005) shows that satisfaction contains emotional components also. Hence, satisfaction has both cognitive and affective dimensions. Affect is one dimension of customer delight also and explained the largest variance (Almeida and Nique, 2005). As satisfaction itself is a dimension of customer delight and both are post-consumption experiences, satisfaction is likely to influence customer delight positively. It is to be realized that post-consumption satisfaction is subsumed within overall customer delight, but satisfaction is conceptually different from customer delight. Customer delight includes many dimensions other than satisfaction, like, positive surprise, personalization etc (Almedia and Nique, 2005).

*Conceptualization 6:* Post-consumption satisfaction is a component of customer delight and positively influences overall customer delight.

### **5. Consequences of romantic brand love**

#### **5.1. Brand love and intention to pay price premium**

If an individual is emotionally attached to a brand, then he/she will be willing to pay premium price for purchasing the brand (Thomson et al, 2005). Emotional attachment with a brand is positively associated with maintaining proximity with the brand and mental distress created due to actual or anticipated separation from the brand.

For that reason, the individual will strongly intend to purchase the brand which he/she loves. To purchase the brand, he/she will be willing to pay price premium. How much premium the individual will be willing to pay will depend on the degree of love felt.

*Conceptualization 7:* If an individual strongly loves a brand, he/she will be willing to pay price premium to buy the brand in order to avoid the separation distress.

### **5.2. Brand love and brand loyalty**

Brand love predicts brand loyalty (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). According to Oliver (1999), brand loyalty has different levels which are – cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty and action or behavioral loyalty. Cognitive loyalty is based on the knowledge acquired about the alternative brand information. Affective loyalty is based on emotional liking for the brand. Conative loyalty represents strong intention to repurchase the brand. The cognitive, affective and conative loyalties are developed in the mind of an individual, but they are not actualized. Action loyalty will take place when the external obstacles (Oliver, 1999) are not there. The obstacles refer to various situational forces and competitor's marketing efforts. Therefore, it can be inferred that the brand love will at least lead to conative loyalty, if not action loyalty.

*Conceptualization 8:* Romantic brand love positively influences conative brand loyalty.

Conative brand loyalty refers to the strong intention to be loyal to a brand (Oliver, 1999). Oliver has also stated that sometimes the conative loyalty does not get transformed into action loyalty due to the presence of some obstacles. That implies that if the obstacles would not be there then the conative loyalty would lead to action loyalty. Shimp and Madden (1988) have also stated that an individual strongly desiring a brand may not make the actual repeat purchase because of the presence of some external constraints.

*Conceptualization 9:* Conative loyalty positively influences action loyalty in the absence of any external constraints or obstacles. Level of conative loyalty will motivate the individual to overcome the obstacles also.

### **5.3. Brand love and positive word-of-mouth**

If the consumer loves a brand, then it is also expected that the consumer will say positive things to others about the brand. The study conducted by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) has also shown that brand love positively influences the positive word-of-mouth for the brand.

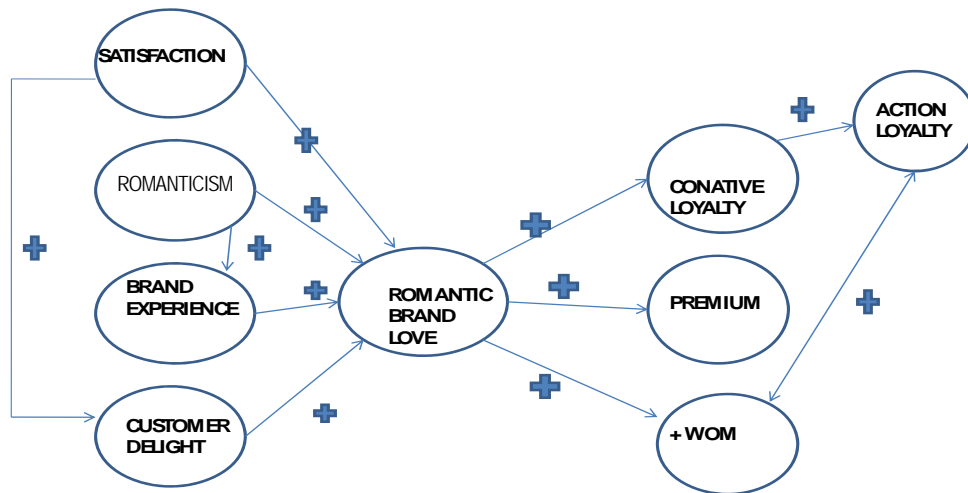
*Conceptualization 10:* Romantic brand love positively influences the tendency to spread positive words about the loved brand which in turn speeds up the diffusion of the brand throughout the market.

#### 5.4. Action loyalty and positive word-of-mouth

Increased satisfaction leads to greater positive word-of-mouth (Ranaweera and Menon, 2008). Customer satisfaction is an antecedent to loyalty (Terblanche and Boshoff, 2010). Satisfaction gets translated into loyalty when the satisfaction is strongly held (Chandrashekar, Rotte, Tax, Grewal, 2007). Therefore, a loyal customer must be satisfied and that satisfaction will motivate the loyal customer to spread positive word-of-mouth.

Conceptualization 11: Action loyalty towards a brand is positively associated with spreading positive word-of-mouth about the brand.

The following theoretical framework (Figure 2) has been developed based on the above conceptualizations:



**Figure 2. Antecedents and consequences of romantic brand love**

(+) sign denotes positive relationship. Each single-headed arrow flows from predictor to the dependent construct. Double-headed arrow denotes correlation or covariance relation between two constructs.

#### 6. Discussions

Brand love as a whole is a romantic and internal feelings of an individual for any brand. It has two theoretical dimensions: brand intimacy and brand passion. Brand intimacy refers to the emotional liking for the brand. Brand passion refers to the feelings of arousal after coming in contact with the brand or brand related stimuli. Intimacy and passion are reciprocally correlated. In most of the cases excluding few exceptions, this correlation is expected to be positive (Sternberg, 1986). The level of

arousal will mainly depend on the quality of brand experiences evoked. The marketing strategies play an important role in this regard. Many marketers have already recognized the fact.

Commitment or loyalty is an outcome of this romantic brand love. Customers can view a brand as a person. Therefore, an individual can love a brand, as he/she can love another person. The marketer must be able to develop a lovable brand. In order to do that the marketer must focus on some brand specific and individual specific variables while formulating the marketing strategies. Few researchers (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Holt, 1995) have stated the importance of the experiential aspects of individual buying behavior. These experiential aspects of buying behavior are closely linked with individual's romantic personality trait and Individual romanticism enriches the experiential aspects of consumption (Campbell, 1987; Holbrook, 1997; Holbrook and Olney, 1995). Therefore, a romantic person is likely to enjoy the experiences evoked from a brand or brand related stimuli at a greater level compared to any non-romantic person. Brand advertisements should contain much romantic themes in order to evoke much romantic feeling about the brand in the mind of the audiences. Thus the brand advertisements of many less hedonic and mundane products, like, bottled mineral water, water purifier, mouth washer etc may contain romantic themes which will increase the brand's romantic appeal. Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) study shows that the level of perceived hedonism in a product category has significant positive impact on love for a brand in that product category. This finding says that brand love felt by a consumer tends to be at a lower level for a lesser hedonic product category compared to any higher hedonically perceived product category. In order to mitigate this negative impact of lower perceived product category hedonism on romantic brand love, brand advertisements carried out in these low hedonic product categories should especially contain romantic themes.

Post-consumption satisfaction plays important role in the context of brand love. Following the notion of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) it is postulated that continued satisfaction over time will lead to brand love and few satisfied customers will experience it. The reason behind this is that the long-term satisfaction most probably leads to customer delightment and customer delightment positively impacts brand love. However, the important connotation of this proposition is that- satisfaction must be sustained for a longer period. Short-term satisfaction most probably will not lead to brand love and only satisfaction is not the sufficient condition for brand love to be experienced. There are other factors. An appropriate example in this context would be the impact of various short-term loyalty programs on long-term customer loyalty. For example, an airline company is offering special discount to its frequent flyers. A group of passenger probably will be highly satisfied with this discount offer and will take the flights of that particular airline leaving others. It is short-term satisfaction. However, will it lead to true or long-term loyalty? When the airline will stop the loyalty program, many passengers will probably switch to other competitor airlines. Then

what is the solution? During the loyalty program the particular airline must try to provide some other experiences (other than mere price discount) to its passengers which will make them delighted. If these experiences remain successful in making the customers fall in a kind of romantic love for the airline through continuing delightment, then it might lead to loyalty (conative or action). The loyalty is likely to sustain for longer period, if it is generated from love. On the other hand, the loyalty is less likely to sustain, if it is generated from any short-term satisfaction generated through any short-term loyalty programs. If an individual really loves a brand then he/she will not even think about other alternative brands available in the market. Thus the competitors will be ignored and the competitive pressure will get reduced.

Brand love leads to positive word of mouth and greater intention to pay premium price. Therefore, brand love is related to the price elasticity of the demand for the brand. If most of the consumers love a brand very much, they will not switch, even if the marketer charges premium price. An individual who loves a brand will intend to be loyal to the brand (conative loyalty, as described by Oliver, 1999). However, the individual will make actual repeat purchase of the brand, if any external constraint (Shimp and Madden, 1988; Oliver, 1999) is not operating. The external constraints might be, low disposable income, family pressure, social group pressure etc (Shimp and Madden, 1988). Therefore, it might be a situation that a group of potential customers love a brand, but is not making repeat purchase because of some external constraints. Marketers may try to eliminate some external constraints. For example, if potential customers are not making the brand purchase, because of their low disposable incomes – the marketer can reduce the brand price. If social group pressure is acting as a constraint, the marketer can try to influence the opinion leaders through their marketing campaigns. It is also a fact that few constraints marketer can not eliminate, like, competitors' marketing efforts.

This article has done a conceptual analysis of romantic brand love, its antecedents and consequences based on prior literature review. Future researches can be done to develop a scale to measure romantic brand love. It has already been stated that the brand love scale developed by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) is unidimensional – which is theoretically incorrect. Romantic brand love scale must capture the multiple dimensions of love in order to be psychometrically valid and reliable. Managers can use this scale to measure the brand love in target segment.

## **7. Conclusions**

Managers should develop appropriate strategies to enhance the target customers brand love. Brand love will result in sustained loyalty, intention to pay premium price and positive word-of-mouth. Consumers, who are in real love with a brand, will stick to it in order to avoid separation distress. Theoretically the romantic brand love is bi-dimensional, rather than being unidimensional. Traditional researches

in the field of branding showed that satisfaction had direct influence on brand loyalty. Present analysis challenges this conventional notion by stating that the relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty is mediated by other variables, like, romantic brand love and customer delight.

Strategy formulation intended to develop brand love should be done based on the antecedent variables identified. Brand advertisements should contain romantic themes. Romantic ad content will stimulate individual's romantic feelings for a brand. Favourable brand experiences are likely to stimulate brand love. Customer delightment will have positive impact on brand love. Marketers must try to prolong the feelings of the satisfactions of the target consumers. Satisfaction leads to brand love, if sustained for longer period. Short-term satisfaction is not enough to generate brand love. Future researches must be conducted to develop a psychometrically reliable scale to measure romantic brand love.

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